

# TESTIGOS CRISTIANOS DE JEHOVÁ

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LB December 14, 2010

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS

Re: Advance Directive Card (Tarjeta de Instrucciones Previas)

Dear Brothers:

In obedience to the Bible mandate, Jehovah's Witnesses abstain from blood (Acts 15:28, 29). This is our decision and one which we explain to medical personnel when we have to undergo some form of surgery. However, if the need for medical assistance were to arise suddenly or unexpectedly, how would we inform the doctors of our decision? (Ecclesiastes 9:11). It could be that after an accident or sudden illness, we lose consciousness and are unable to advise medical personnel of our stand regarding blood transfusions. In such situations, the "Advance Directive Card" (*the Card*) that the branch has provided us with for years, can speak for us.

However, in recent years, Spanish legislation has made provision for any citizen to state in advance his wishes regarding health care and treatment. These wishes are honored in circumstances where the individual is unable to express them personally<sup>1</sup>. To ensure that these advance directives are respected, each Autonomous Region has created an office that registers our instructions and that can be consulted by authorized medical personnel.

**How can I register my advance directives?** Each Autonomous Region has created a *Documento de Instrucciones Previas* (or DIP), also known as a *declaración de voluntades anticipadas*. Congregation elders can help you obtain a copy of this document and will tell you where to register it. While the DIP expands on what is expressed in *the Card*, it should never contradict what we have stated in it. Therefore, those we have named as representatives should be the same individuals in both documents.

**Should I fill out and register the DIP?** Apart from informing others of our decision regarding blood transfusions, the DIP covers more situations. For example, instructions can be given as to what medical treatment we wish to receive in the case of incurable or terminal illness, as well as our instructions regarding organ donation. Having to make a decision on these matters may hold some back from filling out a DIP. However, remember that any instruction given on document can be revoked at any time by providing the registry office with written confirmation of the change. At the same time, since registering our wishes may require an appointment with the designated Registry or office, some brothers find that they never get round to filling out a DIP. However, it is very important that we fill out and register our DIP as soon as possible. While it is true that *the Card* itself constitutes an advance directive and may suffice to inform others of our stand, *the Card* is a private document. It is not a registered document that is regulated by the Law for Patient Autonomy mentioned earlier. Therefore, registering our DIP will always offer us greater legal protection.

**If I have already registered my DIP, does this mean that it is no longer necessary to carry *the Card* that the branch provides?** On the contrary. If we always carry the card with us

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<sup>1</sup> Article 11 of the Law 41/2002, dated November 14, regulating the autonomy of the patient and the patient's rights and obligations in matters of information and clinical documentation

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along with other ID, medical personnel will immediately know that we do not accept blood transfusions. Therefore, it would be sensible to fill out a DIP, register it in our Autonomous Region and fill out and carry *the Card* as well. If we have already registered our DIP, we must indicate this on *the Card*. To help us in this regard, congregations have received a supply of self-adhesive stickers with the caption in Spanish: THIS REFUSAL IS RECORDED IN THE ADVANCE DIRECTIVES REGISTER OF MY AUTONOMOUS REGION. Please remember that only those who have filled out and registered their DIP should place this sticker on *the Card*. An example appears on page 3 of this letter.

Even if we have registered our DIP, medical personnel may not always accept our stand or seek alternatives to blood transfusions. Nonetheless, counting on a legal framework that allows us to register our wishes in advance is proving to be of great value. For this reason, we recommend you make full use of this provision (Proverbs 21:5). Additionally, it would be good to provide a copy of the DIP to our family doctor or GP, so that it can be included in our medical history.

As we pray for Jehovah to continue blessing our efforts to respect the sanctity of blood, we take this opportunity to send you our warm greetings and Christian love,

Your brothers,

*Testigos Cristianos de Jehová*

P.S.: If our DIP has already been registered and the representatives we have designated do not coincide with those on *the Card*, we recommend replacing *the Card* so that the same representatives appear on both documents. If this is not possible, our DIP should be updated so that it includes the same representatives indicated on *the Card*.

\_\_\_\_\_ Tercer testigo  
DNI \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Segundo testigo  
DNI \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Primer testigo  
DNI \_\_\_\_\_

Los abajo firmantes, mayores de edad, conocen al otorgante y declaran que al firmar estas instrucciones previas lo ha hecho con plena conciencia y de forma voluntaria, no apreciando ningún tipo de coacción en su decisión.

TESTIGOS:

teléfonos .....  
.....  
con domicilio en .....  
mayor de edad, con DNI n.º .....  
D./D.ª .....  
teléfonos ..... o en su defecto a .....  
con domicilio en .....  
mayor de edad, con DNI n.º .....  
D./D.ª .....  
REPRESENTANTES:

INSTRUCCIONES PREVIAS

**NO ADMINISTRAR SANGRE**

Esta negativa consta en el Registro de Voluntades Anticipadas de mi Comunidad Autónoma

